

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph beginning at page 1, line 12 with the following amended paragraph:

[[The advanced]] Advanced computer [[network]] networks like the Internet [[accelerates]] accelerate digitalization of information and [[allows]] allow a large number of users to access required information readily. Such advanced environment, on the other hand, causes digital contents including digital information with the copyright to be readily duplicated as unauthorized copies without permission of copyright holders. Infringement of the copyright due to the illegal copies is becoming a significant problem. [[With a view]] In order to [[preventing]] prevent [[the]] ~~infringement of the copyright with regard to~~ against copyrighted color images, which are the main part of digital information in [[the]] digital contents, the digital watermarking technique draws [[the vigorous]] heightened attention. The digital watermarking technique embeds the copyright information in data of an original color image in a secret and unnoticeable manner to any third person and extracts the copyright information from the embedded original color image according to the requirements.

Please replace paragraph beginning at page 2, line 23 with the following amended paragraph:

The object of the present invention is thus to provide an improved method of embedding and decoding a digital watermark[[, which]]. Such an improved method takes advantage of characteristics intrinsic to color images, readily and securely embeds a digital watermark into an original image without deteriorating the original image, and effectively maintains the digital watermark intact [[against]] without being affected by clipping, JPEG compression, and other series of digital processing.